

CONDENSED CLASSICS

GIL BLAS

By ALAIN RENE LE SAGE

Condensation by
Nathan Haskell Cole

Alain Rene Le Sage, author of one of the world's most remarkable books, was born on Dec. 13, 1668, in a small town of western France. He died nearly eighty years later, in 1747.

Unlike many men of genius, Le Sage did not go through life doing great things. His father, who held some responsible legal positions, left a considerable fortune when Le Sage became an orphan as a child. His guardians either stole or lavished the money, but he was given a good education and was admitted to the bar. Fees came in slowly and Le Sage faced extreme poverty. Yet he dared to marry and turned to the stage for means of support.

For years he wrote, never really successful, but never actually in want. He was nearly forty years of age when a comedy gave him a Parisian reputation, and a novel made him known to France. The first two parts of "Gil Blas" were published in 1715, but they were not liked as well as his earlier story. Le Sage, however, was not discouraged. He labored over it as devotedly as a great sculptor over a block of marble. The third part was not published until 1734, and not until 1735 was the last part put forth. During these twenty years he had also turned out play after play, and numerous books. He did not cease to write until his seventieth birthday had passed.

Outside of France Le Sage will always live because of his one book that ranks among the world's masterpieces. "Gil Blas" is life itself, as a picture of Spain in its most colorful period. "It is a work," says Sir Walter Scott, "which renders the reader pleased with himself and mankind."

GIL BLAS, the only son of an old soldier, had reached the age of seventeen when his uncle, the village priest, who had taught him a little Latin, Greek and logic, sent him off with 40 ducats and a bad mule to study divinity at Salamanca.

His adventures began immediately. At his first stop he was cheated out of his mule; as he was eating his dinner a wily flatterer invited himself to be his guest and showed his gratitude by the good advice never to be taken in by praise. He had to pay an exorbitant reckoning and went on his way, "giving to as many devils as there are saints in the calendar, the parasite, the landlord and the inn."

He soon fell into the hands of bandits, who made him join them on their raids. In one of them they captured Dona Mencia, wife of the Marquis de la Guardia, and brought her to their cavern. Gil Blas pretended to be ill and escaped with the grateful lady. He was arrested as one of the bandits and as he was wearing clothes recognized by one of their victims, and his pockets were full of money, he was thrown into jail. After several weeks' imprisonment his innocence was established, but the jailer had robbed him of everything.

At Burgos he sought out Dona Mencia who presented him with a hundred ducats and a costly ring.

He bought a pretentious outfit for twice its value and decided that instead of becoming a licentiate, "he would make his way in this world rather than think of the next." A second gift of a thousand ducats from Dona Mencia confirmed him to his resolve.

He bought two mules and hiring a servant, set forth for Madrid. His servant conspired with several rogues to make a fool of him. One of them, Camilla, pretended to be related to Dona Mencia, invited him to hired lodgings as if to her own home, and there he was festered and flattered. As a mark of special favor she exchanged her ruby ring, which she declared was worth 300 pistoles, for his, and procured him an invitation to a great country seat for hunting and fishing.

But when he arose in the morning, his servant, his two mules, his portmanteau and Dona Mencia's pretended relatives had vanished. The ruby ring was a cheat.

Fortunately he fell in with a boyhood friend, Fabricio, at Valladolid, and by his advice became a servant to a clergyman, the canon Sedillo, at whose house he led an easy life. The canon soon died, leaving him his worthless library, and the good fortune of becoming assistant to his physician, the famous Doctor Sangrado. Under him Gil Blas became particularly proficient in his method of practice, which consisted of nothing but blood-letting and "drenching of water." He declared that he made as many widows and orphans as the siege of Troy; one of his victims was the betrothed of a giant Biscayan, who threatened him with dire vengeance, and he fled to Madrid, where he became valet to a mysterious and wealthy Don Bernardo, his only duty being to keep the wardrobe brushed and to tend door. But he happened to fall in with Rolando, captain of the brigands; and Don Bernardo, seeing him in such sus-

picious company, discharged him with six ducats.

For one reason or another he kept changing employers; he served now a dissipated hidalgo, then an intriguing actress, then an aged libertine whose daughter, in gratitude for aiding her to win back her recreant lover, Don Luis Pacheco, gave him a hundred pistoles, and, on her father's death, got him a place with still another aged rouse, Don Gonzales, whose dressing operations, when he arose at noon, reminded him of the resurrection of Lazarus.

Here again he acted as intermediary in a love affair, but when he told his infatuated employer that he was being duped, he was turned off, though given a recommendation to the Marquesa de Chaves, reputed the cleverest woman in Madrid, because she was as solemn as an owl, and rarely spoke. Her salon, called "the Fashionable Institution for Literature, Taste and Science," was the resort for the wits and notables of Madrid.

Here again he had easy work, but getting into trouble about a girl, was compelled to leave the city. On his way to Toledo he rescued a young nobleman, named Don Alfonso, from arrest. They became friends and after Don Alfonso reached home, he and his father became Gil Blas' patrons, placing him as secretary to his relative, the archbishop of Granada, who was inordinately vain and as broad as he was long.

Gil Blas praised his sermons and was regarded as a young man of excellent judgment until after the prelate's mind was affected by apoplexy and his homilies became discordant ravings. Gil Blas obeyed the archbishop's command to tell him if he fell short in his preaching and was indignantly packed off. Reduced to extremities once more, he passed as the brother of a disreputable actress and thus secured the position as secretary to a Portuguese grandee, the Marquis de Marialva. The trick was discovered. He returned to Madrid and after many amusing and not always creditable adventures, was appointed under secretary to the duke of Lerma, prime minister to the king.

His duties may be gauged by his comment: "One makes a merit of any dirty work in the service of the great." His experiences with the upper and the lower world, with actors, poets, libertines, physicians, bandits, adventurers, and hidalgos and their servants, had sharpened his wits, and his native ability and smattering of education gave him growing influence. He was courted, flattered and bribed; his conceit and avarice became colossal.

He declared that "a court had all the soporific virtues of Lethe in the case of poor relations" and confessed that "every trace of his former gay and generous temper had disappeared." Pride came before a fall. Having been employed to procure a questionable mistress for the heir-apparent, he was arrested by the king's orders and thrown into the dungeon of Segovia. The prince intervened, but he was exiled from the two Castiles. All his property was seized and his mercenary engagement to a wealthy jeweler's daughter was broken.

Then his friend, Don Alfonso, whom he had got appointed as governor of Valencia, presented him with a small estate near that city. On his way thither he stopped at his birthplace and found his uncle a mental wreck and his mother worn out in caring for his dying father. He gave his father a pompous funeral, and settled an annuity on his mother, but the town's people were so indignant with him for his neglect of his family that they threatened to mob him.

Glad to escape with his life, he reached Valencia, where he was received at his new home by seven or eight servants provided by Don Alfonso. He got rid of most of them and lived frugally, marrying Antonia, daughter of his farmer, Don Basilio. But his idyllic happiness ended with the death of his wife in childbirth.

Soon afterward the crown prince came to the throne and offered him a place of high responsibility. Gil Blas who had learned wisdom, replied that "all he wanted was a good situation, where there was no inducement to violate his conscience, and where the favors of his prince were not likely to be bartered for filthy lucre."

He was made confidant to the prime minister, who entrusted him with the education of his illegitimate son and heir. This brought him a title.

After some years when the duke lost the king's favor, Gil Blas followed him into retirement, and on his death was remembered with a bequest of 10,000 pistoles. He returned to his beautiful estate, made a second marriage, and lived, happy and respected, training his children wisely and confiding to his memoirs all his errors, crimes, joys and sorrows, together with his opinions of literature, society and the stage. His narrative is interspersed with long and fascinating stories related by various characters whom he had met; these and his own adventures furnish a vivid picture of the romantic Spain of the seventeenth century.

"Gil Blas" is one of the wisest and most amusing of romances, and though it is not free from the coarseness permitted at that time, vice is not depicted attractively and its teaching is generally moral.

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Trace Birds by Use of Anklets

Habits of Our Feathered Friends
Discovered by American
Banding Society.

20,000 ALREADY ARE MARKED

Incredible Wing Mileage is Revealed
in Some of the Reports—New Facts
About Domestic Relations of
Jenny Wren and Husband.

New York.—The habits of birds, the age they attain, the dispersal or distribution of their young, their mating customs, the strength of the homing instinct, the consistency with which migrant birds return to given areas in their winter range, routes followed by individual birds, and even polygamy—these and countless other problems the American Bird Banding association seeks to solve by methods that leave no opportunity for questioning the accuracy of the date.

The several hundred members of the association have for 12 years been conducting their research on a large scale in the western hemisphere, and European societies whose aims are identical with those of the American workers have been operating since 1898. These bodies of investigators pursue their experiments by the use of rings, bands of tags, each bearing an inscription or return address and a serial number. The bands are usually made of aluminum and are manufactured in about a dozen different sizes to fit the legs of all birds, from the smallest warbler to the clumsy pelican and the mighty eagle.

Fifty-eight thousand of these bands have so far been made for the American Bird Banding association, and approximately 20,000 have been placed by members on the legs of native wild birds. Each ring is stamped with the words, "Notify Am. Museum, N. Y.," and following this, or on reverse side of the band, is a serial number. At the time the band is placed on the bird the banded records on a standard file card all information relating to the operation. These data include the number of the band, the name of the bird, its age (whether nestling, fledgling or adult), locality, date, name of bander and remarks. The bird, having been thoroughly "catalogued," is sent on its way.

Long Migrations Recorded.

Workers for the association have carried bands into the remotest regions. As members of scientific and exploring parties they have placed the tags on birds in Alaska, Greenland, Labrador, and even in the antarctic a thousand miles from Cape Horn. A young robin, banded in its nest on the lonely shores of Great Slave lake, in the Northwest territory of Canada, has been reported from Louisiana, more than 2,000 miles away; a Massachusetts tern, or sea swallow, has been recovered a similar distance from its birthplace, in the waters off the Venezuelan coast, and a chimney swift, a bird less than six inches long, has been recorded at its New Hampshire summer home after three seasonal journeys to South America, involving almost incredible wing mileage, the minimum distance covered having been 18,000 miles.

Aside from the birds which are systematically trapped, wild birds, either dead or alive, fall into human hands in a variety of ways.

The longest period record thus far turned in has been produced by a common crow, which was banded in the nest at Berwyn, Pa., May 17, 1914, and shot while stealing chickens on the sixth anniversary of the date of banding, May 17, 1920, at Phoenixville, Pa., only eight miles from the site of its

birth. The inscription on the aluminum band worn by this bird is as legible today as it was when received from the maker, notwithstanding the six years of rough treatment under all weather conditions. One of the most astounding details of bird life brought out by banding has to do with the domestic relations of Jenny Wren and her sonful husband.

Wren is Fickle.

Wrens habitually raise two large families in rapid sequence each season, and in these circumstances it would naturally be thought the head of the establishment would give his uninterrupted attention to his household. Not so, however, with an Ohio house wren, who, the moment his first hatch of offspring was on the wing, ruthlessly abandoned his little brown wife and, moving off less than a hundred yards, reared his second family with a newly found mate. This abominable fickleness might never have been suspected had it not been for

Here's Another Peril
in "Hitting Bottle"

Winchester, Va.—The art of drinking from a bottle is being lost in this vicinity. E. Clarence Smith of Berkeley county entertained a party of men friends at an old-time "pitch" party, at which bottled pop was served. One of Smith's guests had not gurgled anything for so many years that when he went about it in the old-time way the suction fastened the mouth of the bottle tightly to his lips and it could not be removed.

Finally one of the guests procured a feather and tickled his friend under the nose, provoking a laugh, which broke the connection.

the numbered rings used on all of the characters involved.

Another house wren with a history is the "little old woman who lived in a shoe." She and her husband and their 13 children (reared in two installments) were all banded. No word has ever been heard from the children since they left home, but a year later a wren was seen at the old "shoe bungalow" with a bracelet on his leg, but no mate was near. The observer is left wondering if perhaps there is not a wren Reno somewhere in the South. Of the total of 20,000 birds banded approximately 400, or 2 per cent, have so far been heard from, and additional recoveries are being received from time to time.

PHYSICAL PERFECTION



In John J. Walkins of Dorchester, Mass., the civil service examiners believe they have found a perfect man, physically. This former heavyweight boxing champion of the U. S. S. M. Vernon romped from machine to machine, making a strength test record of 100 per cent.

Old Almanac.

Burlington, Kan.—W. W. Richards of Lebo believes he is the possessor of the oldest almanac in Kansas. His almanac was printed in 1701, thus being 220 years old. It was printed in Welsh by Thomas Jones.

Insane May Be Cured by Music

Pianist Boguslawski Evokes First
Response From Many Stuporous
Patients.

DOCTORS WATCH EXPERIMENT

After Two Years' Research Musician
Claims Remarkable Results From
Music in Arousing Patients
From Mental Stupor.

Chicago, March 19.—The Italian woman sat huddled in the corner, her thin shoulders shaking. The color came to her bleached skin. She worked her fingers over her face, over the walls; she tore frantically at her fingers with her teeth. The intermezzi of "Cavalleria Rusticana" ended. The woman kneeling in the corner, Adeline M., sagged down. A nurse leaned over her and remarked:

"She says: 'Oh, my baby! Baby needs a mother. When am I going home?' Say, you know, that's the first time she's spoken since they brought her here. She refused to nurse her baby."

Mossaye Boguslawski, Russian pianist, who is now living in Chicago, fingered through the "Miserere" from "Il Trovatore." Shudders crept over the Italian woman in the corner and she wept. The tears sped down her

face. She weaved her head from side to side.

"Yes, yes," she moaned, "I have a heart—everybody is happy—baby—father—oh, don't forget me." And she vibrated to the rush of the music, while her mouth twisted into a grotesque smile.

Tries Music as Aid to Insane.

It was at the state hospital for the insane in Dunning. Surrounded by the "stuporous," or depressed types of insane patients, Mr. Boguslawski sat at a piano running through the emotional gamut of music. A small audience of alienists watched the experiment.

Can insanity be cured through music? After two years of research, Mr. Boguslawski claimed remarkable results from music on such cases. He has been performing experiments at the Dunning institution, it is said, for the last month. He has been holding weekly "musical clinics."

Psychiatrists and health department officials, as well as Chicago physicians, are watching the experiments at Dunning. At each "music therapeutic" test, as Mr. Boguslawski has named his psychiatric process, Dr. D. B. Rotman of the hospital staff has collected data for presentation to the American medical profession for discussion.

"These experiments are the first of their kind ever conducted in the United States," said Dr. Rotman. "They are highly interesting. There is a universal potency to music; it appeals to the subtler elements of the mind. Patients long considered dull are aroused by this music to the expression of emotional display. The effect on that Italian woman, for instance, was overwhelming. Now we have found a response, she may be curable."

A Revelation, Says Official.

"This is a revelation to me," exclaimed Dr. E. A. Foley, assistant superintendent of the institution, watching the pianist endeavor to arouse the patients from their mental torpor with many varieties of melody.

"I have studied this for two years; I know it will work," replied Mr. Boguslawski. "I don't claim to be able to cure insanity, but I can relieve much mental distress. Probably a third of the 100,000 insane in the United States can be greatly improved by 'music therapeutics.'"

One of the cases studied was Mary K., an Armenian refugee. She was made insane by war horrors. She saw her mother, father and brother slain before her eyes. The Chopin funeral march today brought her to her knees in mumbled prayer. Tragic memories apparently were revived. She fell on the floor, sobbing.

"Nostalgia," explained Boguslawski. "An intelligent approach. A relief through the caress of sympathetic music for pent-up desires, suppressions, imagined fears. Music is the scalpel which help open the wound. After that it's a case for physicians, not musicians."

Actress Collects Shoes for Poor



Inez Plummer, New York actress, placed a barrel outside the theater and stood there collecting old shoes from passers-by for the poor of the city.

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An Old Favorite.

"Professor," said Mrs. Newrich to the distinguished musician who had been engaged to entertain her guests, "what was that lovely selection you played just now?"

"That, madam," he answered, "was an improvisation."

"Ah, yes, I remember now. I knew it was an old favorite of mine, but I could not think of the name of it for the moment."—Boston Transcript.

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